

'Your Postal Podcast' 75th Edition Transcript – September 2014

MiMi Johnson: Welcome to *Your Postal Podcast*, a production of USPS Corporate Communications. I'm MiMi Johnson. In this September 2014 edition, we'll take a trip back to 1963 in an interview with a former Postal employee who knew rock legend Janis Joplin before she hit the big time. We'll also hear from one of the last surviving Medal of Honor recipients who served in the Korean War about how it feels to be honored on the Postal Service's new Medal of Honor stamp folio.

Janis Joplin Segment

Johnson: The Janis Joplin Forever stamp was recently released in San Francisco in front of fans old and young. It seems that 50 years after the Summer of Love, the story of her life and her music still resonates. David Rupert found an old friend of hers with an interesting postal connection who has some fascinating personal memories of the legendary singer.

David Rupert: Although, it was more than 50 years ago, Jae Whitaker still remembers when a new brash new roommate fresh from Texas moved into her third floor apartment in San Francisco.

Jae Whitaker: She lived with me, meaning that I was there when she came in and I was there when she left.

Rupert: She's talking about Janis Joplin, the rock siren who eventually become one of the icons of the countercultural movement in the 60s

Whitaker: That was in 1963 and there was five of us living there. It was a party house sometimes, you know (chuckles). That's the way it was back then in the 60s.

Rupert: The two lived in the same house on States Street. Whitaker was also a musician and the two even sang together in exchange for beers at a North Beach bar.

While Janis eventually was discovered and went on to stardom, Jae went on to work at the Post Office starting in 1967, and eventually retired with 34 years of service – most of them at the Mission Street Post Office in San Francisco.

Whitaker: Oh, well, I did military mail. I cased mail for a while and then I got on the window service.

Rupert: Joplin's fame rose as she scored hits like "Bobby McGee," "Piece of My Heart" and "Cry Baby." But she still remembered her friend.

Whitaker: And we used to go down to Princeton, spend Christmas together. And the more she became famous you know we kind of drifted apart. But we were always glad to see each other when we did see each other.

Rupert: Joplin's fame came as a surprise.

Whitaker: I must say that I would have never, ever guessed that she would become a legend.

Rupert She would attend Janis' shows and was always thrilled to hear her name from the stage.

Whitaker: You know, I was really proud when I would go to a venue that she would get on and say, "My friend Jae Whitaker," and dedicate a song to me, you know. That was really – you know – that made me feel good.

Rupert: Fittingly, Janis Joplin was a frequent user of the mail.

Whitaker: She used a lot of stamps because she wrote a lot of letters. Well, when she was here she was writing them home to her mother and father, and sister and brothers. She used a lot of stamps (laughs).

Rupert: A Janis Joplin commemorative stamp was released last month and for her friend, it was a moving tribute.

Whitaker: Isn't that amazing? I tell you, that is so fantastic. I really loved that. It touched my heart, you know, to see her on a stamp.

Medal of Honor Segment

MiMi Johnson: One of the few surviving Korean War Medal of Honor recipients was recently celebrated by fellow residents of his New Mexico hometown on the occasion of his appearance on a new sheet of stamps, and Peter Hass was on hand to file this report:

Peter Hass: More than 200 Gallup, New Mexico, residents gathered in front of the Gallup Post Office in August to join the Postal Service's salute to Gallup native Hiroshi Miyamura, recognizing his inclusion as one of the Korean War Medal of Honor recipients pictured on the new Forever Stamp sheet.

Even in his cozy southwestern hometown along old Route 66, where a street and a high school already bear his name, the humble Miyamura told television reporters who came from Albuquerque to cover the event that he was surprised by the outpouring of appreciation at the Gallup Post Office ceremony.

Hiroshi Miyamura: I was told just a few of my friends would be here for the ceremony – I didn't expect anything like this at all. It's quite a surprise, and quite an honor for all my fellow veterans to show up today. I'm really surprised at the turnout, to tell you the truth. This stamp isn't just to honor me, it honors all Medal of Honor recipients from all the wars.

Hass: The new stamps themselves depict the Army and Navy Medals of Honor, and Miyamura proudly wore his Army Medal of Honor around his neck as hundreds of locals once again paid tribute to Gallup's most-decorated war hero. Miyamura's photo is included on the cover of the stamp folio, along with 12 other Korean War Medal of Honor recipients' who were alive at the time the stamps were printed.

Corporal Miyamura, a member of Company H, 7th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, received the Medal of Honor for his heroic efforts on the night of April 24th, 1951, near the Inchon River in North Korea. Company H was occupying a defensive position when the enemy attacked. Miyamura, aware of the imminent danger to his men, left his shelter wielding his

bayonet and killed approximately 10 of the enemy in close hand-to-hand combat. When the intensity of the enemy attack increased, Miyamura ordered his men to fall back while he remained to cover their movement. He killed more than 50 of the enemy before his ammunition was depleted and he was severely wounded. He was later captured by the enemy and survived 28 months in captivity before his release, upon which he was awarded the Medal of Honor for his bravery and devotion to duty.

At the Post Office ceremony, Miyamura was emotional as he accepted a framed enlargement and stamp sheet from Gallup Postmaster Thelma Malone.

Miyamura: I would especially like to give recognition to my fellow veterans of all wars. They sacrificed so much, and their families have sacrificed so much during their service to the country. And I'm just a representative of this award, and hopefully everyone will recognize and remember our fellow veterans of all the wars. Thank you very much. (Audience applause.)

Hass: After the ceremony, Miyamura stayed for 90 minutes to autograph the stamp sheets purchased by attendees. The Gallup Post Office sold over \$5,000 worth of the stamps during the event.

Miyamura: I hope throughout America they'll use this stamp, because it will serve as a reminder to every family that had a veteran or person – loved one – serve in the Armed Forces.

News Roundup

Johnson: And now, here's a look at recent Postal news:

The U.S. Postal Service ended the June 30, 2014, fiscal year quarter with a net loss of 2 billion dollars, compared to a net loss of 740 million dollars for the same period last year.

The Postal Service has recorded a loss in 21 of the last 23 quarters, the excepted quarters being the two in which Congress rescheduled the Retiree Health Benefits prefunding payments.

Postal revenue continued to improve as a result of the Postal Service's January mail price increase, successful sales and marketing initiatives, and continued success in growing the package business. Total operating revenue of \$16.5 billion increased by \$327 million, or 2.0 percent, compared to the same period last year.

Shipping and package revenue was up 6.6 percent. Standard Mail revenue was up 5.1 percent, driven by a nearly 1 percent increase in volume and the January 2014 price increase. First-Class Mail volume's decline continued, and was down 1.4 percent for the quarter – however, the January price increase offset this decline, resulting in a 3.2 percent revenue increase in the category.

Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe said the Postal Service is seeing momentum in its package business and continued use of direct mail as an advertising medium: "We've been effective in developing and marketing our products, and we're improving how we leverage data and technology — all providing a higher return on mail for many customers and causing them to take a fresh look at the Postal Service."

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